

of Public Works in the Ontario Government. Native talents much above the average, untiring industry, a high sense of honour, and an unsullied record of duty faithfully discharged in a position of trust, were his, it is conceded on every hand, in a pre-eminent degree. The death of such a man, at the early age of fifty-five, when, had his health been spared his friends might have hoped that a score of years of usefulness were yet before him, is indeed a most serious loss to the Province which he served so well. Mr. Fraser combined in himself, in an unusual degree, intellectual abilities such as gave him a foremost place among the orators and debaters of the Legislature, with the business capacity and disciplined energy which fitted him for an office in which those qualities are in the highest degree necessary. It is not often that the fluent speaker, the keen logician, the master of repartee, can be relied on as a patient worker and a successful overseer in matters requiring close attention to business methods and details. But in his case it would be difficult to say in which capacity he was the more successful. On the one hand, he was, in the days of his physical strength, recognized as the Rupert of debate on the Government side of the House. On the other, the man who, for twenty years, discharged the high trust of the Commissionership of Public Works, the great spending department of the Government, with an ability so conspicuous and an integrity so unimpeachable that even those who were his most strenuous political opponents are as ready as his personal friends to declare him an honest and upright, as well as exceptionally able man, certainly earned the encomiums which are being heaped upon his tomb by party adversaries as well as by political allies.

The circumstances connected with Mr. Fraser's death suggest a comment or two which it is a pleasure to make. In the first place, the generosity with which the press, controlled by those who had so long been the most strenuous political opponents of the deceased, hasten to pay their evidently hearty tribute to the splendid qualities of his character, is very pleasing. We are by no means ready to subscribe to the familiar motto which requires one to say nothing but good of the dead. There is nothing to admire in the feeling which prompts those who may have pursued with bitter detraction a public man during his whole career to turn around and speak of him with fulsome eulogy as soon as death has removed him from the arena. If the teachings and influence of such a man during his lifetime have been really pernicious, or if we honestly believe them to have been so, there is no law of charity, and certainly no law of truth, which requires that we should change our convictions, or even conceal them, because he is no longer upon the

stage. The evil that men do lives after them, and often that evil acquires a subtler and more dangerous influence by reason of the glamour which is cast over it after death. In such cases either the denunciations during life, or the eulogies after death must be dishonest, and the dishonesty is no less to be deprecated in the latter case than in the former. But in a case of this kind, when even political opponents freely admit that there never was a personal accusation against the deceased, all can appreciate the sincerity as well as the generosity which makes the Opposition press vie with that on the Government side in doing honour to departed worth. Truly we are making progress in respectable journalism, as is shown by many other indications as well.

Another observation may not be out of place in this connection, seeing that it is one which seems to be especially needed just now in some quarters. The deceased, to whose memory so many just tributes are being paid, belonged to the religious body whose members were the other day indiscriminately denounced by the leader of a new party, which boasts of its numbers and influence in Canada, as disloyal and unfit to hold office in the Dominion. We blush to find it necessary to refer seriously to so narrow and contemptible a dogma as one actually promulgated. Christopher Fraser was a Roman Catholic. He even entered political life mainly that he might defend what he believed to be the rights of his co-religionists. His views in this regard may have been right, or they may have been wrong. We have, as our readers well know, no admiration for many of the teaching and practices of that denomination. But who that has a mind, a heart, and a conscience, will dare to say that Christopher Fraser was not a loyal citizen and a good patriot, that he was not in every way worthy of his high position in the Government of the Province? Where have we a truer Canadian, a more upright and honourable citizen? Surely in the light of such an example everyone who is not wilfully blinded by religious bigotry must see that the man or the body of men who, in a country in which a very large minority of the citizens are members or adherents of the Roman Catholic church, can bind themselves together on a platform having for its chief plank the declaration that no Roman Catholic shall be permitted to hold office, write themselves down as the narrowest, the most bigoted, and the most intolerant of all Canadian citizens.

Nor the bow cannot stand always bent, nor can human nature or human frailty subsist without some lawful recreation.—*Cervantes.*

Straw hats frequently indicate the direction in which the wind blows.

APPROPRIATIONS AND PATRONAGE.

Replying in a temperate article to our remarks last week upon the subject of bribery of constituencies by means of appropriations for public works, the *Globe* of Monday, after quoting our last paragraph, says:

"Nobody supposes that either Government has ever made such a corrupt offer as a formal official act of administration. Our denial in regard to the Ontario Government went a good deal further than that. The instance we referred to was that of an individual Minister, the late Mr. Fraser, who would not announce, and would not allow his supporters to announce, that a new asylum was to be erected in his constituency. The announcement was not made until after the election. We referred also to a case where a proposed grant for a bridge in another constituency was withdrawn because it was said the object of the grant was to influence an election. As in these cases we say that 'the Government' acted properly, so we say that the Dominion Government acted improperly when, during the contests in North and South Victoria, Mr. Costigan said in a letter to an elector:—'No elector who supported Mr. Fairbairn before has any reasonable grounds to withdraw that support from him now because a subsidy was not granted last session. Mr. Fairbairn has the assurance of the Premier that the road will be one of the very first to receive a subsidy.' And Mr. Bowell wrote that the 'Pontypool and Bobcaygeon Railway had not been forgotten; that in fact, the parties were distinctly told last session that it would be one of the first railways to receive favorable consideration.'"

If THE WEEK were pleading a party cause or merely striving to get the better in an argument, it would be easy on the one hand to suggest that the location of the asylum in question may have been elegantly understood, and the temporary withdrawal of the bridge appropriation only a bit of good tactics, after it had done its work and everybody interested knew well that if the right man were elected the appropriation would be renewed. We might say, on the other hand, that the sentences quoted from certain Dominion ministers may have been simple statements of fact, necessary to counteract the effect of misrepresentations by the other party. Or we might, with a good deal of truth, plead that the late Mr. Fraser was a man of exceptionally sturdy political virtue, and that his ideas of right could not be accepted as indicating the average standard reached by other members of the Government. But we shall do none of these things. We admit that the words of the Dominion Ministers are fairly open to the worst construction, and that, granting the purest intention, it is not easy to see what more Mr. Fraser and his colleagues could have done under the circumstances. This is but a repetition in substance of the admission already made. What follows? Says the *Globe*: "Where the proof of the existence of the evil in Dominion politics is so abundant it seems to us that it would be better